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## about



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**a·bout** [ə bôwt] CORE MEANING: a grammatical word that refers to different sides or aspects of something from some point of orientation • (*prep*) *a book about a dog* • (*adv*) *There's a lot of laziness about.*

### 1. preposition

**in connection with:** in connection with or relating to • *think about problems*

### 2. preposition

**approximately:** close to in number, time, or degree • *inviting about 15 people*

### 3. preposition

**doing or attending to:** with or in an activity • *go about your business*

### 4. preposition

**close by:** placed, located, or happening close by or around • *frantic activity going on all about us*

### 5. preposition

**around:** around or on a place or person • *a red scarf about her neck*

### 6. adverb preposition

**in various places:** positioned here and there • *scattered about the house*

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- *scattered about the house*

### 7. *adverb preposition*

in **different directions**: from place to place in different directions or in no particular direction • *children running about everywhere*

### 8. *adverb*

in **circulation**: available or in circulation  
 • *there was never much money about*

### 9. *adverb*

into a **reversed position**: in or to the opposite direction • *the wrong way about*

### 10. *adverb*

**all around**: on every side of or all the way around "He proceeded to the banks of the Hudson, and looked about among the vessels." Jules Verne *Around the World in 80 Days* (1873)

### 11. *adverb*

**used as intensifier**: used to emphasize a statement, usually when expressing impatience or anger (*informal*) • *Well, it's about time you showed up!*

### 12. *adverb*

**NAUTICAL to opposite tack**: on or to the opposite tack

[Old English *onbūtan* "on or around the outside of," from *on* (see on) + *būtan* (see but)]

**be about to** be on the point of doing something • *The game was about to start.*

**be what something or somebody is (all) about** to be what something or somebody involves or has as a purpose (*informal*)

**not about to** used to emphasize that somebody is certainly not going to do something (*informal*) • *I'm not about to apologize!*

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*adj.* : being the most complete  
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Main Entry: **1** about **1**

Pronunciation: ə-ˈbaut

Function: *adverb*

**Eymology:** Middle English, from Old English *abutan*, from *1* a- +  
*butan* outside -- more at BUT

**Date:** before 12th century

**1 a :** reasonably close to <*about* a year ago> **b :** ALMOST <*about*  
 starved> **c :** on the verge of -- usually used with *be* and a following  
 infinitive <*is about* to join the army> -- used with a negative to  
 express intention or determination <*not about* to quit>

**2 :** on all sides : AROUND

**3 a :** in rotation **b :** around the outside

**4 :** HERE AND THERE

**5 :** in the vicinity : NEAR

**6 :** in succession : ALTERNATELY <*turn about* is fair play>

**7 :** in the opposite direction <*face about*> <*the other way about*>

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### Pronunciation Symbols

\ə\ as a and u in about	\e\ as e in bet	\o\ as aw in law
\ē\ as e in kitten	\ē\ as ea in easy	\oi\ as oy in boy
\ər\ as ur/er in further	\g\ as g in go	\th\ as th in thin
\a\ as a in ash	\i\ as i in hit	\[th]\ as th in the
\A\ as a in ace	\I\ as i in ice	\u\ as oo in loot
\ā\ as o in mop	\j\ as j in job	\u\ as oo in foot
\au\ as ou in out	\[ŋ]\ as ng in sing	\y\ as y in yet
\ch\ as ch in chin	\O\ as o in go	\zh\ as si in vision

For more information see the [Guide To Pronunciation](#).

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